

# PD WEEKLY, VOL. 1, ISS. 5

## BASEBALL NUMBER



*"Kleine Welten IV (Small Worlds IV)" by Vasily Kandinsky (French (born Russia), Moscow 1866–1944 Neuilly-sur-Seine) via The Metropolitan Museum of Art is licensed under CC0 1.0*

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*This issue was inspired by a game featuring my rough'n'tumble home team, the Tampa Bay Rays, versus those dainty fellows from Boston in the red stockings. Mr. Wodehouse describes the homesickness of a temporary American ex-pat in Blighty, while Mr. Thayer delivers the classic baseball poem – with a rebuttal. Mr. Brown offers some wry commentary on the game, and Mr. Colvin rounds things up with a 'what if' sci-fi approach. Matt Pierard, Editor. Creative Commons Non-Commercial Copyright 2017.*

## **ONE TOUCH OF NATURE**

by P. G. Wodehouse

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Man With Two Left Feet*

The feelings of Mr J. Wilmot Birdsey, as he stood wedged in the crowd that moved inch by inch towards the gates of the Chelsea Football Ground, rather resembled those of a starving man who has just been given a meal but realizes that he is not likely to get another for many days. He was full and happy. He bubbled over with the joy of living and a warm affection for his fellow-man. At the back of his mind there lurked the black shadow of future privations, but for the moment he did not allow it to disturb him. On this maddest, merriest day of all the glad New Year he was content to revel in the present and allow the future to take care of itself.

Mr Birdsey had been doing something which he had not done since he left New York five years ago. He had been watching a game of baseball.

New York lost a great baseball fan when Hugo Percy de Wynter Framlingham, sixth Earl of Carricksteed, married Mae Elinor, only daughter of Mr and Mrs J. Wilmot Birdsey of East Seventy-Third Street; for scarcely had that internationally important event taken place when Mrs Birdsey, announcing that for the future the home would be in England as near as possible to dear Mae and dear Hugo, scooped J. Wilmot out of his comfortable morris chair as if he had been a clam, corked him up in a swift taxicab, and decanted him into a Deck B stateroom on the \_Olympic\_. And there he was, an exile.

Mr Birdsey submitted to the worst bit of kidnapping since the days of the old press gang with that delightful amiability which made him so popular among his fellows and such a cypher in his home. At an early date in his married life his position had been clearly defined beyond possibility of mistake. It was his business to make money, and, when called upon, to jump through hoops and sham dead at the bidding of his wife and daughter Mae. These duties he had been performing conscientiously for a matter of twenty years.

It was only occasionally that his humble role jarred upon him, for he loved his wife and idolized his daughter. The international alliance had been one of these occasions. He had no objection to Hugo Percy,

sixth Earl of Carricksteed. The crushing blow had been the sentence of exile. He loved baseball with a love passing the love of women, and the prospect of never seeing a game again in his life appalled him.

And then, one morning, like a voice from another world, had come the news that the White Sox and the Giants were to give an exhibition in London at the Chelsea Football Ground. He had counted the days like a child before Christmas.

There had been obstacles to overcome before he could attend the game, but he had overcome them, and had been seated in the front row when the two teams lined up before King George.

And now he was moving slowly from the ground with the rest of the spectators. Fate had been very good to him. It had given him a great game, even unto two home-runs. But its crowning benevolence had been to allot the seats on either side of him to two men of his own mettle, two god-like beings who knew every move on the board, and howled like wolves when they did not see eye to eye with the umpire. Long before the ninth innings he was feeling towards them the affection of a shipwrecked mariner who meets a couple of boyhood's chums on a desert island.

As he shouldered his way towards the gate he was aware of these two men, one on either side of him. He looked at them fondly, trying to make up his mind which of them he liked best. It was sad to think that they must soon go out of his life again for ever.

He came to a sudden resolution. He would postpone the parting. He would ask them to dinner. Over the best that the Savoy Hotel could provide they would fight the afternoon's battle over again. He did not know who they were or anything about them, but what did that matter? They were brother-fans. That was enough for him.

The man on his right was young, clean-shaven, and of a somewhat vulturine cast of countenance. His face was cold and impassive now, almost forbiddingly so; but only half an hour before it had been a battle-field of conflicting emotions, and his hat still showed the dent where he had banged it against the edge of his seat on the occasion of Mr Daly's home-run. A worthy guest!

The man on Mr Birdsey's left belonged to another species of fan. Though there had been times during the game when he had howled, for the most part he had watched in silence so hungrily tense that a less experienced observer than Mr Birdsey might have attributed his immobility to boredom. But one glance at his set jaw and gleaming eyes told him that here also was a man and a brother.

This man's eyes were still gleaming, and under their curiously deep tan his bearded cheeks were pale. He was staring straight in front of him with an unseeing gaze.

Mr Birdsey tapped the young man on the shoulder.

'Some game!' he said.

The young man looked at him and smiled.

'You bet,' he said.

'I haven't seen a ball-game in five years.'

'The last one I saw was two years ago next June.'

'Come and have some dinner at my hotel and talk it over,' said Mr Birdsey impulsively.

'Sure!' said the young man.

Mr Birdsey turned and tapped the shoulder of the man on his left.

The result was a little unexpected. The man gave a start that was almost a leap, and the pallor of his face became a sickly white. His eyes, as he swung round, met Mr Birdsey's for an instant before they dropped, and there was panic fear in them. His breath whistled softly through clenched teeth.

Mr Birdsey was taken aback. The cordiality of the clean-shaven young man had not prepared him for the possibility of such a reception. He felt chilled. He was on the point of apologizing with some murmur about

a mistake, when the man reassured him by smiling. It was rather a painful smile, but it was enough for Mr Birdsey. This man might be of a nervous temperament, but his heart was in the right place.

He, too, smiled. He was a small, stout, red-faced little man, and he possessed a smile that rarely failed to set strangers at their ease. Many strenuous years on the New York Stock Exchange had not destroyed a certain childlike amiability in Mr Birdsey, and it shone out when he smiled at you.

'I'm afraid I startled you,' he said soothingly. 'I wanted to ask you if you would let a perfect stranger, who also happens to be an exile, offer you dinner tonight.'

The man winced. 'Exile?'

'An exiled fan. Don't you feel that the Polo Grounds are a good long way away? This gentleman is joining me. I have a suite at the Savoy Hotel, and I thought we might all have a quiet little dinner there and talk about the game. I haven't seen a ball-game in five years.'

'Nor have I.'

'Then you must come. You really must. We fans ought to stick to one another in a strange land. Do come.'

'Thank you,' said the bearded man; 'I will.'

When three men, all strangers, sit down to dinner together, conversation, even if they happen to have a mutual passion for baseball, is apt to be for a while a little difficult. The first fine frenzy in which Mr Birdsey had issued his invitations had begun to ebb by the time the soup was served, and he was conscious of a feeling of embarrassment.

There was some subtle hitch in the orderly progress of affairs. He sensed it in the air. Both of his guests were disposed to silence, and the clean-shaven young man had developed a trick of staring at the man with the beard, which was obviously distressing that sensitive person.

**'Wine,' murmured Mr Birdsey to the waiter. 'Wine, wine!'**

**He spoke with the earnestness of a general calling up his reserves for the grand attack. The success of this little dinner mattered enormously to him. There were circumstances which were going to make it an oasis in his life. He wanted it to be an occasion to which, in grey days to come, he could look back and be consoled. He could not let it be a failure.**

**He was about to speak when the young man anticipated him. Leaning forward, he addressed the bearded man, who was crumbling bread with an absent look in his eyes.**

**'Surely we have met before?' he said. 'I'm sure I remember your face.'**

**The effect of these words on the other was as curious as the effect of Mr Birdsey's tap on the shoulder had been. He looked up like a hunted animal.**

**He shook his head without speaking.**

**'Curious,' said the young man. 'I could have sworn to it, and I am positive that it was somewhere in New York. Do you come from New York?'**

**'Yes.'**

**'It seems to me,' said Mr Birdsey, 'that we ought to introduce ourselves. Funny it didn't strike any of us before. My name is Birdsey, J. Wilmot Birdsey. I come from New York.'**

**'My name is Waterall,' said the young man. 'I come from New York.'**

**The bearded man hesitated.**

**'My name is Johnson. I—used to live in New York.'**

**'Where do you live now, Mr Johnson?' asked Waterall.**

**The bearded man hesitated again. 'Algiers,' he said.**

Mr Birdsey was inspired to help matters along with small-talk.

'Algiers,' he said. 'I have never been there, but I understand that it is quite a place. Are you in business there, Mr Johnson?'

'I live there for my health.'

'Have you been there some time?' inquired Waterall.

'Five years.'

'Then it must have been in New York that I saw you, for I have never been to Algiers, and I'm certain I have seen you somewhere. I'm afraid you will think me a bore for sticking to the point like this, but the fact is, the one thing I pride myself on is my memory for faces. It's a hobby of mine. If I think I remember a face, and can't place it, I worry myself into insomnia. It's partly sheer vanity, and partly because in my job a good memory for faces is a mighty fine asset. It has helped me a hundred times.'

Mr Birdsey was an intelligent man, and he could see that Waterall's table-talk was for some reason getting upon Johnson's nerves. Like a good host, he endeavoured to cut in and make things smooth.

'I've heard great accounts of Algiers,' he said helpfully. 'A friend of mine was there in his yacht last year. It must be a delightful spot.'

'It's a hell on earth,' snapped Johnson, and slew the conversation on the spot.

Through a grim silence an angel in human form fluttered in—a waiter bearing a bottle. The pop of the cork was more than music to Mr Birdsey's ears. It was the booming of the guns of the relieving army.

The first glass, as first glasses will, thawed the bearded man, to the extent of inducing him to try and pick up the fragments of the conversation which he had shattered.

'I am afraid you will have thought me abrupt, Mr Birdsey,' he said awkwardly; 'but then you haven't lived in Algiers for five years, and I

have.'

Mr Birdsey chirruped sympathetically.

'I liked it at first. It looked mighty good to me. But five years of it, and nothing else to look forward to till you die....'

He stopped, and emptied his glass. Mr Birdsey was still perturbed. True, conversation was proceeding in a sort of way, but it had taken a distinctly gloomy turn. Slightly flushed with the excellent champagne which he had selected for this important dinner, he endeavoured to lighten it.

'I wonder,' he said, 'which of us three fans had the greatest difficulty in getting to the bleachers today. I guess none of us found it too easy.'

The young man shook his head.

'Don't count on me to contribute a romantic story to this Arabian Night's Entertainment. My difficulty would have been to stop away. My name's Waterall, and I'm the London correspondent of the \_New York Chronicle\_. I had to be there this afternoon in the way of business.'

Mr Birdsey giggled self-consciously, but not without a certain impish pride.

'The laugh will be on me when you hear my confession. My daughter married an English earl, and my wife brought me over here to mix with his crowd. There was a big dinner-party tonight, at which the whole gang were to be present, and it was as much as my life was worth to side-step it. But when you get the Giants and the White Sox playing ball within fifty miles of you—Well, I packed a grip and sneaked out the back way, and got to the station and caught the fast train to London. And what is going on back there at this moment I don't like to think. About now,' said Mr Birdsey, looking at his watch, 'I guess they'll be pronging the \_hors d'oeuvres\_ and gazing at the empty chair. It was a shame to do it, but, for the love of Mike, what else could I have done?'



He looked at the bearded man.

'Did you have any adventures, Mr Johnson?'

'No. I—I just came.'

The young man Waterall leaned forward. His manner was quiet, but his eyes were glittering.

'Wasn't that enough of an adventure for you?' he said.

Their eyes met across the table. Seated between them, Mr Birdsey looked from one to the other, vaguely disturbed. Something was happening, a drama was going on, and he had not the key to it.

Johnson's face was pale, and the tablecloth crumpled into a crooked ridge under his fingers, but his voice was steady as he replied:

'I don't understand.'

'Will you understand if I give you your right name, Mr Benyon?'

'What's all this?' said Mr Birdsey feebly.

Waterall turned to him, the vulturine cast of his face more noticeable than ever. Mr Birdsey was conscious of a sudden distaste for this young man.

'It's quite simple, Mr Birdsey. If you have not been entertaining angels unawares, you have at least been giving a dinner to a celebrity. I told you I was sure I had seen this gentleman before. I have just remembered where, and when. This is Mr John Benyon, and I last saw him five years ago when I was a reporter in New York, and covered his trial.'

'His trial?'

'He robbed the New Asiatic Bank of a hundred thousand dollars, jumped his bail, and was never heard of again.'

**'For the love of Mike!'**

**Mr Birdsey stared at his guest with eyes that grew momentarily wider. He was amazed to find that deep down in him there was an unmistakable feeling of elation. He had made up his mind, when he left home that morning, that this was to be a day of days. Well, nobody could call this an anti-climax.**

**'So that's why you have been living in Algiers?'**

**Benyon did not reply. Outside, the Strand traffic sent a faint murmur into the warm, comfortable room.**

**Waterall spoke. 'What on earth induced you, Benyon, to run the risk of coming to London, where every second man you meet is a New Yorker, I can't understand. The chances were two to one that you would be recognized. You made a pretty big splash with that little affair of yours five years ago.'**

**Benyon raised his head. His hands were trembling.**

**'I'll tell you,' he said with a kind of savage force, which hurt kindly little Mr Birdsey like a blow. 'It was because I was a dead man, and saw a chance of coming to life for a day; because I was sick of the damned tomb I've been living in for five centuries; because I've been aching for New York ever since I've left it—and here was a chance of being back there for a few hours. I knew there was a risk. I took a chance on it. Well?'**

**Mr Birdsey's heart was almost too full for words. He had found him at last, the Super-Fan, the man who would go through fire and water for a sight of a game of baseball. Till that moment he had been regarding himself as the nearest approach to that dizzy eminence. He had braved great perils to see this game. Even in this moment his mind would not wholly detach itself from speculation as to what his wife would say to him when he slunk back into the fold. But what had he risked compared with this man Benyon? Mr Birdsey glowed. He could not restrain his sympathy and admiration. True, the man was a criminal. He had robbed a bank of a hundred thousand dollars. But, after all, what was that? They**

would probably have wasted the money in foolishness. And, anyway, a bank which couldn't take care of its money deserved to lose it.

Mr Birdsey felt almost a righteous glow of indignation against the New Asiatic Bank.

He broke the silence which had followed Benyon's words with a peculiarly immoral remark:

'Well, it's lucky it's only us that's recognized you,' he said.

Waterall stared. 'Are you proposing that we should hush this thing up, Mr Birdsey?' he said coldly.

'Oh, well—'

Waterall rose and went to the telephone.

'What are you going to do?'

'Call up Scotland Yard, of course. What did you think?'

Undoubtedly the young man was doing his duty as a citizen, yet it is to be recorded that Mr Birdsey eyed him with unmixed horror.

'You can't! You mustn't!' he cried.

'I certainly shall.'

'But—but—this fellow came all that way to see the ball-game.'

It seemed incredible to Mr Birdsey that this aspect of the affair should not be the one to strike everybody to the exclusion of all other aspects.

'You can't give him up. It's too raw.'

'He's a convicted criminal.'

'He's a fan. Why, say, he's \_the\_ fan.'

Waterall shrugged his shoulders, and walked to the telephone. Benyon spoke.

'One moment.'

Waterall turned, and found himself looking into the muzzle of a small pistol. He laughed.

'I expected that. Wave it about all you want'

Benyon rested his shaking hand on the edge of the table.

'I'll shoot if you move.'

'You won't. You haven't the nerve. There's nothing to you. You're just a cheap crook, and that's all. You wouldn't find the nerve to pull that trigger in a million years.'

He took off the receiver.

'Give me Scotland Yard,' he said.

He had turned his back to Benyon. Benyon sat motionless. Then, with a thud, the pistol fell to the ground. The next moment Benyon had broken down. His face was buried in his arms, and he was a wreck of a man, sobbing like a hurt child.

Mr Birdsey was profoundly distressed. He sat tingling and helpless. This was a nightmare.

Waterall's level voice spoke at the telephone.

'Is this Scotland Yard? I am Waterall, of the \_New York Chronicle\_. Is Inspector Jarvis there? Ask him to come to the phone.... Is that you, Jarvis? This is Waterall. I'm speaking from the Savoy, Mr Birdsey's rooms. Birdsey. Listen, Jarvis. There's a man here that's wanted by the American police. Send someone here and get him. Benyon. Robbed the New Asiatic Bank in New York. Yes, you've a warrant out for him, five years old.... All right.'

He hung up the receiver. Benyon sprang to his feet. He stood, shaking, a pitiable sight. Mr Birdsey had risen with him. They stood looking at Waterall.

'You-skunk!' said Mr Birdsey.

'I'm an American citizen,' said Waterall, 'and I happen to have some idea of a citizen's duties. What is more, I'm a newspaper man, and I have some idea of my duty to my paper. Call me what you like, you won't alter that.'

Mr Birdsey snorted.

'You're suffering from ingrowing sentimentality, Mr Birdsey. That's what's the matter with you. Just because this man has escaped justice for five years, you think he ought to be considered quit of the whole thing.'

'But-but—'

'I don't.'

He took out his cigarette case. He was feeling a great deal more strung-up and nervous than he would have had the others suspect. He had had a moment of very swift thinking before he had decided to treat that ugly little pistol in a spirit of contempt. Its production had given him a decided shock, and now he was suffering from reaction. As a consequence, because his nerves were strained, he lit his cigarette very languidly, very carefully, and with an offensive superiority which was to Mr Birdsey the last straw.

These things are matters of an instant. Only an infinitesimal fraction of time elapsed between the spectacle of Mr Birdsey, indignant but inactive, and Mr Birdsey berserk, seeing red, frankly and undisguisedly running amok. The transformation took place in the space of time required for the lighting of a match.

Even as the match gave out its flame, Mr Birdsey sprang.

Aeons before, when the young blood ran swiftly in his veins and life was all before him, Mr Birdsey had played football. Once a footballer, always a potential footballer, even to the grave. Time had removed the flying tackle as a factor in Mr Birdsey's life. Wrath brought it back. He dived at young Mr Waterall's neatly trousered legs as he had dived at other legs, less neatly trousered, thirty years ago. They crashed to the floor together; and with the crash came Mr Birdsey's shout:

'Run! Run, you fool! Run!'

And, even as he clung to his man, breathless, bruised, feeling as if all the world had dissolved in one vast explosion of dynamite, the door opened, banged to, and feet fled down the passage.

Mr Birdsey disentangled himself, and rose painfully. The shock had brought him to himself. He was no longer berserk. He was a middle-aged gentleman of high respectability who had been behaving in a very peculiar way.

Waterall, flushed and dishevelled, glared at him speechlessly. He gulped. 'Are you crazy?'

Mr Birdsey tested gingerly the mechanism of a leg which lay under suspicion of being broken. Relieved, he put his foot to the ground again. He shook his head at Waterall. He was slightly crumpled, but he achieved a manner of dignified reproof.

'You shouldn't have done it, young man. It was raw work. Oh, yes, I know all about that duty-of-a-citizen stuff. It doesn't go. There are exceptions to every rule, and this was one of them. When a man risks his liberty to come and root at a ball-game, you've got to hand it to him. He isn't a crook. He's a fan. And we exiled fans have got to stick together.'

Waterall was quivering with fury, disappointment, and the peculiar unpleasantness of being treated by an elderly gentleman like a sack of coals. He stammered with rage.

'You damned old fool, do you realize what you've done? The police will be here in another minute.'

'Let them come.'

'But what am I to say to them? What explanation can I give? What story can I tell them? Can't you see what a hole you've put me in?'

Something seemed to click inside Mr Birdsey's soul. It was the berserk mood vanishing and reason leaping back on to her throne. He was able now to think calmly, and what he thought about filled him with a sudden gloom.

'Young man,' he said, 'don't worry yourself. You've got a cinch. You've only got to hand a story to the police. Any old tale will do for them. I'm the man with the really difficult job—I've got to square myself with my wife!'

## **Casey at the Bat, & Casey's Revenge**

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems Teachers Ask For*, by Various

### **Casey at the Bat**

It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day;  
The score stood two to four with but an inning left to play;  
So, when Cooney died at second, and Burrows did the same,  
A pallor wreathed the features of the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go, leaving there the rest,  
With that hope which springs eternal within the human breast,  
For they thought: "If only Casey could get a whack at that,"  
They'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, and likewise so did Blake,  
And the former was a puddin', and the latter was a fake;  
So on that stricken multitude a deathlike silence sat.  
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat,

But Flynn let drive a "single," to the wonderment of all,  
And the much-despised Blakey "tore the cover off the ball";  
And when the dust had lifted and they saw what had occurred,  
There was Blakey safe at second, and Flynn a-huggin' third.

Then, from the gladdened multitude went up a joyous yell,  
It rumbled in the mountain-tops, it rattled in the dell;  
It struck upon the hillside and rebounded on the flat;  
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place,  
There was pride in Casey's bearing, and a smile on Casey's face.  
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,  
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt,  
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt;  
Then while the New York pitcher ground the ball into his hip,  
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.



And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,  
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—  
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,  
Like the beating of great storm waves on a stern and distant shore.  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand.  
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised a hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
He signaled to Sir Timothy, once more the spheroid flew;  
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."

"Fraud," cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered "Fraud!"  
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.  
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,  
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;  
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate;  
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,  
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;  
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;  
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout:  
But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.

\_Phineas Thayer.\_

## Casey's Revenge

\_(Being a reply to "Casey at the Bat.")\_

There were saddened hearts in Mudville for a week or even more;  
There were muttered oaths and curses—every fan in town was sore.  
"Just think," said one, "how soft it looked with Casey at the bat!  
And then to think he'd go and spring a bush league trick like that."

All his past fame was forgotten; he was now a hopeless "shine."  
They called him "Strike-out Casey" from the mayor down the line.  
And as he came to bat each day his bosom heaved a sigh,  
While a look of hopeless fury shone in mighty Casey's eye.

The lane is long, someone has said, that never turns again,  
And Fate, though fickle, often gives another chance to men.  
And Casey smiled—his rugged face no longer wore a frown;  
The pitcher who had started all the trouble came to town.

All Mudville has assembled; ten thousand fans had come  
To see the twirler who had put big Casey on the bum;  
And when he stepped into the box the multitude went wild.  
He doffed his cap in proud disdain—but Casey only smiled.

"Play ball!" the umpire's voice rang out, and then the game began;  
But in that throng of thousands there was not a single fan  
Who thought that Mudville had a chance; and with the setting sun  
Their hopes sank low—the rival team was leading "four to one."

The last half of the ninth came round, with no change in the score;  
But when the first man up hit safe the crowd began to roar.  
The din increased, the echo of ten thousand shouts was heard  
When the pitcher hit the second and gave "four balls" to the third.

Three men on base—nobody out—three runs to tie the game!  
A triple meant the highest niche in Mudville's hall of fame.  
But here the rally ended and the gloom was deep as night  
When the fourth one "fouled to catcher," and the fifth "flew out to right."

A dismal groan in chorus came—a scowl was on each face—  
When Casey walked up, bat in hand, and slowly took his place;  
His bloodshot eyes in fury gleamed; his teeth were clinched in hate;  
He gave his cap a vicious hook and pounded on the plate.

But fame is fleeting as the wind, and glory fades away;  
There were no wild and woolly cheers, no glad acclaim this day.  
They hissed and groaned and hooted as they clamored, "Strike him out!"  
But Casey gave no outward sign that he had heard the shout.

The pitcher smiled and cut one loose; across the plate it spread;  
Another hiss, another groan—"Strike one!" the umpire said.  
Zip! Like a shot, the second curve broke just below his knee—  
"Strike two!" the umpire roared aloud; but Casey made no plea.

No roasting for the umpire now—his was an easy lot.  
But here the pitcher twirled again—was that a rifle shot?  
A whack; a crack; and out through space the leather pellet flew—  
A blot against the distant sky, a speck against the blue.

Above the fence in center field, in rapid whirling flight  
The sphere sailed on; the blot grew dim and then was lost to sight.  
Ten thousand hats were thrown in air, ten thousand threw a fit;  
But no one ever found the ball that mighty Casey hit!

Oh, somewhere in this favored land dark clouds may hide the sun,  
And somewhere bands no longer play and children have no fun;  
And somewhere over blighted lives there hangs a heavy pall,  
But Mudville hearts are happy now—for Casey hit the ball!

\_James Wilson.\_

## **"ATABOY!"**

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Pieces of Hate*, by Heywood Broun

Thomas Burke has a cultivated taste for low life and he records his delight in Limehouse so vividly that it is impossible to doubt his sincerity. In his volume of essays called "Out and About London," he spreads his enthusiasm over the entire "seven hundred square miles of London, in which adventure is shyly lurking for those who will seek her out."

In the spreading there is at least ground for suspicion that here and there authentic enthusiasm has worn a bit thin. It is no more than a suspicion, for Burke is a skillful writer who can set an emotion to galloping without showing the whip. Only when he comes to describe a baseball game is the American reader prepared to assert roundly that Burke is merely parading an enthusiasm which he does not feel. We could not escape the impression that the English author felt that a baseball game was the most primitive thing America had to offer and that he was in duty bound to enthuse over this exhibition of human nature in the raw.

We have seen many Englishmen at baseball games. We have even attempted to explain to a few visitors the fine points of the game, why John McGraw spoke in so menacing a manner to the umpire or why Hughie Jennings ate grass and shouted "Ee-Yah!" at the batter. Invariably the Englishman has said that it was all very strange and all very delightful. Never have we believed him. The very essence of nationality lies in the fact that the other fellow's pastime invariably seems a ridiculous affair. One may accept the cookery, the politics and the religion of a foreign nation years before he will take an alien game to his heart. We doubt whether it would be possible to teach an American to say "Well played" in less than a couple of generations.

Burke has no fears. Not only does he describe the game in a general way, but he plunges boldly ahead in an effort to record American slang. The title of the essay is well enough. Burke calls it "Atta-boy!" This is, of course, authentic American slang. It meets all the requirements, being in common use, having a definite meaning and affording a short cut to the expression of this meaning. We can not quite accept the spelling. There is, perhaps, room for controversy here. When the American army

first came to France the word attracted a good deal of attention and some French philologists undertook to follow it to the source. One of them quickly discovered that he was dealing not with a word but a contracted phrase. We are of the opinion that thereafter he went astray, for he declared that "Ataboy" was a contraction of "At her boy," and he offered the freely translated substitute "Au travail garçon."

It will be observed that Mr. Burke has given his attaboy a "t" too many. "That's the boy" is the source of the word. Perhaps it would be more accurately spelled if written "'at 'a boy." The single "a" is a neutral vowel which has come to take the place of the missing "the." The same process has occurred in the popular phrases "'ataswingin'" and "'ataworkin'." These, however, have a lesser standing. "Ataboy" is almost official. One of the American army trains which ran regularly from Paris to Chaumont began as the Atterbury special, being named after the general in charge of railroads. In a week it had become the Ataboy special, and so it remained even in official orders.

Some of the slang which Burke records as being observed at the game is palpably inaccurate. Thus he reports hearing a rooter shout, "Take orf that pitcher!" It is safe to assume that what the rooter actually said was, "Ta-ake 'im out!"

Again Burke writes, "An everlasting chorus, with reference to the scoring board, chanted like an anthem—'Go-ing up! Go-ing up! Go-ing up!'"

Now, as a matter of fact, the "go-ing up!" did not refer to the scoring board, but to the pitcher who must have been manifesting signs of losing control. The shouts of baseball crowds are so closely standardized that we think we have a right to view with a certain distrust such unfamiliar snatches of slang as "He's pitching over a plate in heaven," or "Gimme some barb' wire. I wanta knit a sweater for the barnacle on second," and also, "Hey, catcher, quit the diamond, and lemme l'il brother teach you." It is impossible for us to reconcile "lemme l'il brother" and "quit the diamond."

It must be said in justice to Burke that it is entirely possible that he did hear some of the outlandish phrases which he has jotted down. Among the dough-boys gathered for the game there may have been some

former college professor who had devoted the afternoon to convincing his comrades that he was no highbrow, but a typical American. Such a theory would account for "quit the diamond."

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## ***HALF PAST ALLIGATOR***

By Donald Colvin

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*It takes sportsmanship to make a ball team ...  
and foul play to get a backward race civilized!*

Bill Bradley shooed away the group of Quxas that had surged over the first-base line. With broad grins on their flat, piebald faces, they moved away—in the wrong direction, of course—and squatted in a smiling semicircle around Pat Reed, who was playing third. This was bad, because Reed was a fifty-fifty player: It was an even chance whether he got the ball or the ball got him. One of the half-domesticated thrags broke loose and cantered across the outfield with its peculiar five-legged gait. In the hubbub, Ray Bush stole second. Nobody seemed to notice.

Sighing heavily, Bill returned to the mound and whiplashed in a fast one, tight across the letters. The hitter got only a small piece of it; a pop fly sauntered toward left field. Judging it to a nicety, Gust Mustas came racing in, evaded a tethered thrag, leaped a hole some Quxa had dug and forgotten, and made a shoestring catch, retiring the side. The Quxas cheered deliriously.

Bill trotted off the mound. For a moment, the thrill of the game held him. This was the way things should be: The feel of smoothly flowing muscles, the thudding sound of horsehide hitting a leather glove, the

weight of a bat in your hands in your first ball game after clambering over and scrabbling in an unexplored planet for fourteen months.

Then he caught sight of Candace Mathews, walking among the pneuma-huts that served as the outpost camp for the expedition. Gloom enveloped him again, surrounding him like a dank fog.

\* \* \* \* \*

For fourteen long months, Bill had feasted on the memory of Candy Mathews, on his recollection of her turquoise eyes and cascading brown hair, on the remembrance of her soft lips on his last night under the four moons of Vensor III.

Today she had arrived with the seventy-odd men and women who comprised the appraisal unit, the final group of the planet's explorers. He had looked forward like a schoolboy to her coming. And, like a schoolboy, he had suffered black despair when his dreams were shattered.

For the Candy Mathews who got off the shuttlebug at Camp Outpost was not the Candy Mathews who had said soft words on Vensor III. She was, instead, a self-assured young woman, somehow harder, who felt only an indifferent tolerance toward a tall young man named Bill Bradley, and an all-consuming, hero-worshipping infatuation for a newcomer, a dapper walking brain, Vance Montgomery, one of the council's smart boys, with the title of planet evaluator.

"He's simply wonderful," she had said. And the joy of life had gone out of Bill Bradley.

The appraisal group brought in athletic equipment and Bill's men spontaneously declared a holiday, their first on the planet. Baseball was the order of the afternoon and they shanghaied a not unwilling Bill to pitch. He should, he knew, be laying out reports for Montgomery to study. He did not particularly want to be with Montgomery.

Bill sat on the xetal log that served as a bench.

One Quxa was bent over, examining first base. He made a colorful sight. The first baseman slapped him jovially on the loin cloth to move him.



The owner of the thrag caught up to it and was struggling manfully to lead it away. The five-legged beast defied his efforts, rearing and dragging him. A dozen Quxas stood nearby. Their sympathies were obviously with their fellow-Quxa, but they made no move to help him.

Reed was on the bench next to Bill. He had come in with the appraisal group.

"Your vivid friends," he said, cocking a thumb at the Quxas, "don't appear too bright."

"They're smart enough," said Bill. "Almost as intelligent as we are. It's just that they've never risen above a herd culture."

"Look," said Reed. "I'm a silviculturist. Give me a hunk of wood and I can tell how long it took to grow, what it's good for, where it can be raised and how much board and profit can be made out of it. But this kind of talk throws me. Try another wave-length."

"Socially, they're like the seals or penguins back on Earth. They like to gather in groups. The things they can do individually, they do well. But they don't know how to help each other. That's beyond them."

"Don't understand the meaning of cooperation?"

"The word isn't even in their language. I've seen forty of them standing around, fretting and stewing, while the horals killed off one of their fellows."

"What are horals?"

"The other dominant life-form here. Nasty brutes, like big upright ants with tentacles. Stand about as high as my chest. Most malignant things I've seen. One Quxa can handle any horal, maybe even two or three. But the horals hunt in packs. Good-by Quxa."

"Killing them off, are they?"

"This is the last big concentration the Quxas have left. In another

hundred years, there'll be no more Quxas."

\* \* \* \* \*

They looked again at the natives. The Quxas were something to see—human in form, although somewhat shorter than Earthmen; their skins were blotched and dashed with patches of vivid colors. Antiquarians talked of their resemblance to the ancient circus clowns, a likeness furthered by their broad, flat faces and habitual grins.

"Sort of hate to see them disappear," Bill said glumly. "They're happy, good-natured creatures. In their whole race, I know only one who's mean. We've done our best to help them. But if they won't cooperate even in a matter of life and death, what incentive can you offer them?"

An elbow dug into him.

"Up to the platter, dream boy," said Gust Mustas. "A hit means two runs."

Selecting a bat, Bill made his way to the plate. In the middle distance, Vance Montgomery emerged from a hut. Candy went to him eagerly, put a hand on his arm. A deep rage engulfed Bill.

The first pitch was a curve that failed to break. As it came fatly over the plate, Bill swung angrily. The ball rocketed up and away, past the infield, over the head of the desperately running left-fielder and dropped toward a sure home run.

Then a curious thing happened. One of the Quxas darted away from the gabbling group along the foul line, his short legs churning over the uneven ground. As the ball sank, he dove, plucked it out of the air with one broad hand, turned a somersault and came up with it, grinning. It was an impossible catch and the Earthmen joined the Quxas in applause. Still clinging to the ball, the Quxa made little bobbing bows of acknowledgment.

"Throw it in!" shouted Bill. The Quxa stood motionless. "Throw it in, Adlaa!" Bill urged. He went through a throwing motion.

The Quxa nodded comprehension. He went into a violent wind-up. His left foot came up, his upper body went back, his right arm snapped in an arc. The ball flew from his hand, straight and fast.

In the wrong direction, of course.

The pack of Quxas pelted after it, shouting, picked it up and threw again. To his surprise, Bill found himself pounding after them, bawling fruitless pleas, aware that he looked foolish, but, in his rage, not caring. He closed in on them on the fifth throw and his fingertips touched the ball. He succeeded only in deflecting it. There was a dull \_thunk\_ and the game was over. The ball had struck Vance Montgomery, planet evaluator, squarely in the left eye.

Three things were said then to Bill Bradley.

One was by Montgomery as he handed back the ball. "I was not aware, Bradley, that the job of camp leader entailed joining the rowdiness of the native races."

One was by Candy Mathews, hopping with anger. "You're a barbarian, Bill Bradley. Monty might have been badly hurt."

The third was by a clot of Quxas, crowding eagerly. "Play ball! Billbrad, more play ball!"

To the first two, Bill did not reply. To the Quxas, he said one word, "Nuts!" and dolefully followed Montgomery into the headquarters hut.

\* \* \* \* \*

In spite of his natural prejudice against Montgomery, Bill was forced into a reluctant admiration for the way the man worked.

Montgomery's task was to recommend whether the planet should be marked for immediate colonization, placed on a reserve list for future expansion, or be left strictly alone as unworthy of occupancy. He tore through Bill's reports like a small child through a bag of jellybeans. His questions, if pompous, were pointed.

Within twenty-four hours, ready to leave for the main camp, he called a conference.

He stood before the group, as dapper as a man can be with a rainbow bruise under one eye, complacently listening to the resonance of his own voice. Beside him, Candy nodded worshipful agreement. Bill grumped in a corner.

For a full forty-five minutes, Montgomery outlined additional data he wanted gathered. His voice was faintly chiding, implying by its tone that anybody but a dolt would have obtained the information long ago.

"And now," he said, "we come to the question of the humanoid denizens of this planet—the so-called Quxas." He fingered his black eye. "Many persons might conclude that the Quxas are not worth saving; and in themselves, they are not. However, my preliminary conclusions—based, unfortunately, on insufficient data—lead me to believe that this planet will be used for colonization in about five hundred years. It would be very convenient then to have a dominant life-form friendly to the galactic humans and capable of being integrated with the colonists. Some method of preserving the Quxas must therefore be worked out. In this, the advance group has failed lamentably."

He paused, glanced around triumphantly.

"How do I propose to achieve this? By a historical method. What do nations do when they are in peril? They call upon a single man, place themselves under him and let him lead them out. When the ancient western civilization was in its greatest danger after the fall of Rome, the people gathered around the strong men, made them kings and dukes and earls, and were saved from barbarism.

"I shall do the same for the Quxas. The Quxas shall have a king."

His eyes sought out Bill.

"My acquaintance here has been short. I must rely on advice. Bradley, whom would you recommend as king of the Quxas?"

"Well," said Bill slowly, "Moahlo is the most intelligent. He's

good-natured and kindly. He has a lot of artistic ability. Some of his carvings are being taken back for the Galactic Folk Museum."

"An artist!" said Montgomery in disgust. "Well, let's have a look at him."

\* \* \* \* \*

Moahlo was finishing a figurine near one of the meandering paths that the Quxas had worn by habit, not design. A bemused group of natives looked on admiringly.

Down the path came Ratakka, the biggest of the Quxas, his shoulders proudly back, his face set in the truculent scowl. Bill knew and disliked him, and apprehensively felt sure the peaceful scene would be destroyed. Alone of an amiable, tolerant race, Ratakka was perpetually ill-tempered, the rankling product of Lord knew what alien genetic accident or trauma.

Ratakka found his path obstructed by the carving. Callously, he brought his foot down on the delicate figurine, crushing it to splinters. Moahlo sprang up in gentle protest. Ratakka gave him the back of a meaty hand that knocked him off his feet. Two spectators indicated disapproval. Ratakka smashed their heads together and strode on.

"To save a culture, Bradley," said Montgomery, who had watched the brutal display with admiration, "you need strength, not delicacy or feeling. That man shall be king of the Quxas."

He ran after Ratakka.

The members of the outpost staff looked at Bill in dismay. He shrugged sadly and walked out of the headquarters hut. At the doorway, Adlaa was waiting for him with the same old plea.

"Play ball?" he begged. "More play ball, Billbrad?"

In his despondent mood, Bill did not care.

"All right. I'll throw the ball to you and you throw it back to me."

"Quxas not do that."

"It's just as much fun to throw the ball in one direction as in any other direction," Bill explained patiently. "Unless you throw it back, forget it—no play ball."

Adlaa thought seriously. "Hunky dokey. Want play ball."

They were tossing it back and forth in the middle of a cheering group when a half-track passed, taking Montgomery, Candy and Ratakka to the main camp. The look that the girl gave Bill was disdainful.

"There's a gaggle of natives outside in assorted shades," said Pat Reed the next day. "They want to play ball. Moahlo's at their head. He carved a bat."

"Tell them to beat it. We're busy."

"Let's give them some fun while we can. They won't enjoy life much after King Rat gets back here."

"That's the truth," Bill agreed. "All right."

\* \* \* \* \*

"I wish your painted idiots would get over their baseball mania," complained Rudy Peters, the mineralogist, two days later. "Look me over carefully, will you, Bill? I think my throwing arm just dropped off."

"They're nutty about it, all right," Bill Bradley said. "Too bad it couldn't have been about something with some economic value."

"Economic value, the man wants. Okay, I'll talk economic value to you. Bet you fifty units I can make a better ball team out of these freaks than you can."

"Well, make it thirty."

"You're on, sucker. I've lined up the sweetest shortstop that ever spit

in a glove ..."

"Here's your thirty," said Rudy Peters a week after. "How was I to know that shortstop wouldn't throw the ball to anyone except the center-fielder?"

"Team play's the stuff, lad," said Bill Bradley. "Stress team play. Twenty-five, twenty-seven, twenty-nine, thirty. Exactly right. Another lesson at the same price?"

He was refused, but never on an exploration had Bill Bradley had so much fun. And never, he reminded himself grimly, had he got so little work done. The Quxas were neglecting their skimpy food plots in their eagerness to play. They were getting lean. Finally, with reluctance, Bill called a temporary halt to baseball.

"Billbrad say no baseball until work done," said Moahlo sadly to Adlaa. "Sometimes Billbrad talk like southpaw pitcher."

Adlaa was trying to cultivate his food plot with the help of a thrag. The beast was of independent mind. It dragged Adlaa in eccentric ovals, in defiance of agricultural needs.

"Adlaa want finish work, play baseball," the Quxa commented. "Thrag no play baseball, say nuts to work. Adlaa be old like Old Hoss Radbourne before work done."

Moahlo contemplated. "Adlaa have trouble his thrag. Moahlo have trouble his. Moahlo help Adlaa his thrag and Adlaa help Moahlo his. Get work done more faster."

Adlaa dismissed the revolutionary thought. "Quxas not do."

"We play baseball run down play," argued Moahlo. "Play together. You throw ball me. I throw ball you. Yippee. Man out."

"Same team. Old pals. Want sing team song?"

"Want play team with thrag."

Adlaa considered the matter in this new light. "Like ball game," he said at last in amazement.

"Sure. You, me be us together. Make thrag look like busher."

They both took hold of the thrag. Unable to resist their combined strengths, the beast submitted docilely. They began to work.

\* \* \* \* \*

Glancing out from his labor in the headquarters pneuma-hut, Bill saw the incident in happy surprise. Perhaps, after all, his stay here might produce something to help the culture that Montgomery would introduce upon his return. He had no doubt of Montgomery's success.

Neither, for that matter, had Montgomery. At the main camp, things were going swimmingly.

The camp lay on the very fringe of the Quxa territory, but, by an arduous hunt, Ratakka had captured eight wandering Quxas to whom he immediately set about teaching the duties of subjects. His method was simple—the Quxa followed his orders, which he obtained from Montgomery, or the Quxa was knocked down. If he still refused, he was knocked down again. Within three weeks, Ratakka had them doing things no Quxas ever had done before. They performed them reluctantly and sullenly, but they did them.

Seeing the result, but not the means, Candy was enthusiastic.

"They're working together!" she cried. "Oh, Monty, what will the Quxas do to reward you?"

"Oh, they'll probably make a culture god of me," said Montgomery, managing to look modest. "Like the Greeks did to that Martian, Proma Ss Thaa, who taught them the use of fire."

As time went on, though, the girl began to have doubts.

"But they're doing everything for Ratakka," she protested. "As far as they're concerned themselves, they're more wretched than before."



"That's the way feudal cultures are built, my dear," Montgomery assured her. "The king gives them law and a fighting leader. In return, the subjects take care of his bodily comfort."

"But they look so unhappy!"

"In saving an inferior race, we cannot be concerned too much about the happiness of a few miserable members. Perhaps in three hundred years or so, they can afford happiness."

And finally an incident happened to complete her disillusionment.

One of Ratakka's morose subjects managed to slip the shackles with which he was bound at night and make a bolt for freedom. The king pursued him relentlessly, brought him back and then beat him, coldly and cruelly, slugging and gouging and kicking.

Ashen-faced, Candy moved to interfere; Montgomery restrained her.

"We're saving a race," he said. "You can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs."

Candy turned and ran sobbing to her quarters, unable to dispel the memory of the writhing body on the ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next day was the day to move equipment. It was a policy of the expeditions to leave their wornout machines for the most friendly of the native races, who could dismantle them and use the parts. The equipment not worth toting back to Earth was to be taken to the advance camp, where the Quxa center was. Montgomery also planned that day to take Ratakka to his kingdom.

A few minutes ahead of the motorcade, Candy slipped out, got into a battered half-track and started driving the eighty miles to the advance camp. For the first twenty-five miles, she told herself that her eagerness was because it was a nice day and she wanted to get out of camp.

For the next twenty-five miles, she called herself a liar.

For the third twenty-five miles she gave herself up unashamedly to thinking about Bill Bradley: his smile, his gentleness, the awkward grace of his lean body. Not a man to set a planet on fire—but how pleasant and restful to have around!

She wondered if he would forgive the way she had acted. Somehow she was sure he would.

The narrow vehicular trail ran through a grove of fernlike trees. It's just over the rise, Candy thought, just over the rise and down into the saucer, where Bill is waiting....

The half-track struck a rock, lurched, threw a tread and went off the road, out of control.

That did not matter especially, for the Quxas could use the material very well where it was. Candy went forward briskly afoot. A fallen branch brushed her ankle. Unheeding, she kicked it away. She began to reconstruct Bill, feature by feature: the way his hair swirled on his forehead; his eyebrows, arched and regular; his eyes, wide, deep-seated, with inner pools of merriment; his nose, straight and rather ...

Another branch caught her. She lifted her foot to free it. It did not come free. Another tentacle moved around her, pinioning her right arm to her side. She whirled in terror and found herself in the grip of the horrors.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were a dozen of the horrors, their antenna ears erect, mandibles open. They exuded an acid odor, a sign of hunger. Candy screamed. She fought to reach her pistol, strapped to her right hip. More tentacles stopped her. She screamed and screamed again, throwing her body to shake off the grip, trying to kick with her feet.

There was a movement in the road at the top of the rise. For a moment,

elation surged in Candy, almost stifling her. Perhaps some expedition member had heard her, was hurrying to her rescue. Then she saw that the newcomers were Quxas. Hope vanished, leaving her limp and hollow. To be killed by these horrors was bad enough, but to be killed in the presence of a group of piebald morons, who would stand and watch and moan, but not lift a hand ...

In her agitation, she did not notice that the Quxas were nine in number and wore baseball caps. They drew short clubs, shaped like bats.

"Kill the umpire!" they shouted, hatred born of diamond conflicts in their cry. "Kill the umpire!" they yelled and charged.

\* \* \* \* \*

In military formation, they clubbed their way through their enemies, battering and smashing until Candy was free, with a dozen dying horrors on the ground, their tentacles contracting and writhing. The Quxa leader made his bobbing bow to her.

"How do," he said politely. "We dip them in calcimine vat, you bet. We hang them out like wash. Now we give team yell."

The Quxas put their arms around each other's shoulders. In unison, they chanted:

"Hoe tomata; hoe potata  
Half past alligata,  
Bum, bum, bulligata,  
Chickala dah!  
Pussycats! Pussycats!  
Rah! Rah! Rah!"

"Pussycats," the leader explained to Candy, "are honored animal on planet where Billbrad is head cheese."

"I'll bet you play baseball nicely," Candy said.

Woe broke forth on nine broad faces.

"Misfortunately not," confessed the captain. "Thirty-three teams in Quxa town. Pussycats in thirty-third place." He brightened. "Go ivory hunt now. Catch nine new Quxas. Teach 'em baseball. Then maybe we beat 'em and not be in cellar any more."

Together, the team bobbed politely to Candy and trotted down the road.

Happily, Candy went up the rise, then stopped in astonishment, looking at Quxa town.

Gone was the straggling, haphazard settlement, with the flimsy huts and untended starvation patches where individual Quxas tried to raise their own food. Instead, building sites were laid out in straight, broad rows, and Quxas were working, three and four in a group, raising substantial homes of timber. Others were surrounding the settlement with a wall of brambles, impenetrable to horals. Teams of men, two to a thrag, were plowing, preparing large fields for tillage. And down the side of the settlement, affectionately tended, ran a line of baseball fields.

Just off the road, a Quxa squatted, baseball cap on his head, watching a crude sun dial.

"Nice day for game," he greeted Candy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Speechless with surprise, the girl made a dazed questioning gesture toward the improvements.

"Billbrad do it," the Quxa informed her. "He tell us how. Work one by one, he say, work all time to fill belly, maybe fill horal belly instead. Work all by all, do more quick. Have time in afternoon. Batter up! Sock it, boy! Wing it home, he sliding!"

The sun's shadow touched a peg.

"Five minute!" bawled the Quxa.

The laborers quit work, put away their tools. The farmers herded their

thrags into a strongly constructed corral. The natives gathered in knots at the settlement edge and looked longingly at the baseball fields.

"Yestday I fool Billbrad," confided the Quxa. "I hide ball, catch him off second. Billbrad get all red face and say—"

"Never mind what Bill said," Candy interjected hastily.

The shadow touched another peg.

"Play ball!" the Quxa yelled. "Play ball! Play ball! Play ball!"

He sprang up, produced a baseball glove and spat into it reverently.

"I go play now. You come see. Get scorecard, know players."

He looked at Candy hopefully.

"Specially me," he added.

Out of the moil of Quxas came the lank form of Bill Bradley. He spied the girl, whooped and came running to her. For a few moments they talked at once, in an incoherent and ecstatic jumble. Then Candy, catching control of herself, cited in admiration the change in the Quxa village.

"And you've done all this!" she concluded.

"I didn't do anything!" Bill protested. "They like to play baseball and this sort of happened. We're getting representative government into action now. Each team elects a captain and the captains are the town council. Tonight they're going to vote on naming the settlement Brooklyn."

"You know," said Candy, "I'll bet they'll make you a culture god."

\* \* \* \* \*

The tanned face of Bill Bradley took on the rose hue of a blush.

"Well, Moahlo carved a statue and they've put it in front of league headquarters—that's their city hall," he admitted uncomfortably. "It doesn't look much like me. I've got six arms because they wanted me batting, pitching and catching a ball all at the same time."

Candy slipped a hand into his.

"Is there a place around here," she asked in a small tone, "where a culture god can take a girl and—well, talk to her?"

"Is there!" said Bill. "You just come with me ..."

A heavy object bumped into him. He whirled at the touch.

"Oh! Hi, Ratakka," Bill said in a flat voice.

Montgomery's king had returned to his subjects. He was alone—his captives having escaped off the ride over—and he was in vile temper. Glaring evilly, he motioned at the baseball players. He was recalling an advice of Montgomery: "Whatever your subjects like to do most, do it better than they can. In that way, you will get their respect and find it easier to take over."

"What that fool doings-on?" snarled Ratakka. "Ratakka do, too."

Bill's already sagging spirits sank again. With Ratakka's strength and reflexes, the great brute undoubtedly would become the star of stars, gathering admirers to himself and destroying all the pleasant prospects now so happily started. Still, it was Bill's duty to give him every chance ...

"I'll see what team has an opening, Ratakka. Perhaps you'd better bat seventh for a few days. Then you can move to the clean-up spot."

The giant stopped him. "Ratakka not ordinary Quxa; Ratakka a king. Ratakka not play like those serfs. Want special job."

A wild thought struck Bill. On the playing fields were more than two hundred Quxas, most of them with a justified and carefully nurtured

dislike for the surly slab of muscle before him. In the old days, they could do nothing individually against him.

But the Quxas had learned to fight as a team. If he could only give them the shadow of an excuse, trap Ratakka into rousing their joint anger, take advantage of the prejudices of their new-found love for baseball, then Ratakka would get the reckoning that he deserved, the days of his supremacy would be over, the threat of his tyranny would be removed from a happy race.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bill grinned broadly. "Sure thing, old pal," he said.

He took off his own baseball cap and put it backward on Ratakka's head. He signaled for someone to bring over a mask and chest protector.

"There's only one of these at each playing field," Bill explained. "In a way, he's boss of the game. Are you sure you want to do it? Sometimes the players argue with you."

"Anyone argue with Ratakka," the giant said, raising a huge fist, "Ratakka knock 'em down. Ratakka a king, boss of game."

"Okay, boy, you asked for it," Bill said.

He thrust a whiskbroom into Ratakka's hand.

"You can be umpire," said Bill Bradley.